

Call for Sessions - WEHC 2015 [S20062]

Proposed title of the session

The politics of consumer credit since 1945: an exploratory comparative history

Abstract

This session will reunite a number of scholars who will have met previously (for two days at Queen's University Belfast in September 2014) to begin the task of producing a comparative historical analysis of the politics of consumer credit in several nations. The workshop in Belfast will outline the key issues for investigation and each scholar will leave with a set of research questions to explore. The Kyoto session will provide the opportunity to reconvene to relay findings on those questions to a broader group of interested international scholars.

Taking a number of national case studies (France, Germany, Sweden, UK and USA), this session will discuss the evolving three significant issues. This first is an exploration of political responses to the growing cultural, economic, and social significance of consumer credit. It will examine questions such as:

What factors motivated political engagement with consumer credit markets?

Were these motivations based primarily on economic or social considerations?

To what extent did this engagement secure electoral advantage for those political parties identified with it?

What political actors should we investigate? Should we move beyond political parties and consider civil servants and state bureaucrats? Should we consider the role of trade associations?

What role should we assign to factors such as Keynesianism or neoliberalism in each of the nations under review?

The second theme centres on evolving consumer protection policies in each nation under review. Questions to be considered include:

How paternalistic or liberal were the regimes in each country?

How significant were consumer organisations in each nation?

Did political parties of the left or right show greater interest in consumer protection in the field of consumer credit?

The third theme provides an opportunity to draw together some of our emerging ideas. Questions to consider include:

To what extent were there cross-national influences and trends within the field of consumer credit?

To what extent have particular national or sub-national cultures of consumer credit survived the modernisation of personal finance?

In those localities where they have survived, why was this the case? And where they died out, why was that the case?

What has been the impact of the European Union in terms of consumer credit?

Is it possible to identify an 'Anglo-Saxon' model for the consumer credit sector in the USA and UK that makes these nations different from the majority of European nations?

I. Corresponding Session Organiser

Prof. Sean O'Connell (Queen's University Belfast [United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland])

II. Co-Organiser(s)

1. Corresponding Organiser.
2. Prof. Sabine Effosse (Université de Paris Ouest/Institut universitaire de France [France])
3. Dr. Orsi Husz (Uppsala Universitet [Sweden])

III. Expected Participant(s)

1. same as correspondent.
2. Sabine Effosse (Université de Paris Ouest/Institut universitaire de France [France])
3. Orsi Husz (Uppsala Universitet [Sweden])
4. Jan Logemann (Georg-August-Universität Göttingen [Germany])
5. Paul Thomes (RWTH Aachen University [Germany])
6. Gunnar Trumbull (Harvard Business School [United States of America])